

occasions, in the Upper Great Plains we are facing a crisis of staggering proportions, placing unprecedented stress on every aspect of economic and community life. This is a very serious matter for the entire country. The farms of the Dakotas and the surrounding states produce wheat, corn, and soybeans in abundance, but something much more important: good families and great kids. The rural way of life helps foster the values of hard work and fortitude that have made America great.

In my view, the ongoing crisis in agriculture represents as great a threat to our nation's future as any of the foreign threats we face today. As we work to combat this domestic national security threat and preserve the rural way of life, the NRDP is a truly vital asset. I hope all my colleagues will join the 27 of us on this bill in pressing for its passage and enactment at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

FATHER NICHOLAS MAESTRINI AND FATHER JOHN BORACCO CELEBRATE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD TOGETHER

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Father Nicholas Maestrini and Father John Boracco, two men who have dedicated their lives in service to the Catholic Church, and who have often found their paths cross along the way. On October 22, 2000, the paths of these old friends will converge once again, as they will be honored together by the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME) in Detroit, Michigan, in recognition of their 70th Anniversary of Ordination.

Fr. Maestrini and Fr. Boracco began their long histories of dedicated service to the Catholic Church together as seminary classmates in Monza, Italy. Shortly after becoming ordained priests, both chose to enter into the PIME missionary. PIME is an international community of priests, lay missionaries and lay volunteers who have dedicated their lives to service in foreign lands. Founded in Italy in 1850, it is now a global organization that operates missions throughout the world. Its international headquarters are in Rome, Italy, while PIME U.S. Region is based out of Detroit.

Both Fr. Maestrini and Fr. Boracco joined missions in Asia, and both experienced struggle and hardship there during the chaotic period before, during and after World War II. Fr. Maestrini served as a missionary in Hong Kong from 1931-50. During this time, he suffered through the strife of the Great War and of being interned by the Japanese. Fr. Boracco had it no easier in China, where he was stationed from 1934-54, first in the northern

Henan Province and then at Kai Pheng. He was forced to persevere through imprisonment, the Japanese occupation, and the Communist revolution. In 1954, he was condemned to die at the hands of the Communists, but was instead expelled.

In 1951, Fr. Maestrini was named Superior of the PIME U.S. Region. Four years later, he was joined in Detroit by Fr. Boracco, who was assigned to help with the seminary expansion started by his friend. For the next 19 years, the two formed the perfect team. Fr. Maestrini focused his energy on external matters, such as public relations and fundraising, while Fr. Boracco served as rector and spiritual director of PIME's theological and high school seminars. With success, their roles expanded. Fr. Maestrini oversaw the establishment of three seminaries, two award-winning films, and many fund raising and public relations programs benefitting the foreign missions. Fr. Boracco became Director of the PIME residence for priests, brothers and seminaries. While Fr. Maestrini retired as Superior in 1974, Fr. Boracco retired just last year.

Both Fr. Boracco and Fr. Maestrini remain active within the Catholic community. Aside from assisting at his local parish, Fr. Maestrini publishes a mission newsletter, and continues correspondence with missionaries and benefactors. Fr. Boracco regularly assists several parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

I applaud Fr. Maestrini and Fr. Boracco on their extraordinary legacies of service. For 70 years, they have tirelessly spread the message of faith and good will to others embodied by the Catholic Church, and they have done so while forming a friendship that is truly unique. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I congratulate Father Nicholas Maestrini and Father John Boracco on 70 years of successful service, and wish them both continued success in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. BENNIE THAYER

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, Senator BOND and I would like to submit for the RECORD a tribute to Mr. Bennie Thayer, a long-time business advocate and remarkable man who passed away Monday.

Mr. BOND. Yes, Mr. President, Senator KERRY and I would like to join in making the following statement recognizing Mr. Thayer's lifetime accomplishments.

The remarks follow:

Mr. Thayer earned the respect and admiration of the small business community. Until his passing, Mr. Thayer served as the eloquently outspoken President and CEO for the National Association for the Self-Employed. Representing more than 200,000 members nationwide, as head of NASE Mr. Thayer fought for relief from unfair government regulations and pushed for legislative

action on issues ranging from taxes to retirement plans. I think we will all remember him for his tireless work to get 100 percent deductibility for health insurance purchased by the self-employed. It wasn't easy. In fact, it was a long, long fight, but he managed to build bi-partisan support for 100 percent deductibility. How fitting it would be for Congress to pass such legislation before we adjourn.

In addition to Mr. Thayer's leadership at NASE, he has chaired and served on the board of many local and national business associations covering economic development, credit development, small-business enhancement, and general business growth. Of course, Mr. Thayer knew what he was doing. He could identify with the needs of small business owners and the self-employed because he himself was co-owner of the Board of Natural Health Options and A.W. Curtis Products, a manufacturer of natural health products. In his distinguished career, Mr. Thayer also was called upon at times to advise the past three Presidents—President Reagan, President Bush, and President Clinton.

But Mr. Thayer should be remembered for much more than his impressive resume or for being a champion of and advocate for small businesses and the self-employed. He served tirelessly in several capacities as a leader in his community. For the past seven years, Mr. Thayer was Senior Pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Redeemer in Temple Hills, Maryland. He also worked toward community development and youth mentoring as a board member of such organizations as REDEEM Inc. and the Board of Eagle Flight Inc.

In the most recent issue of "Self-Employed America," NASE's bi-monthly publication, there is an article entitled "Make Yourself Memorable." Mr. Thayer did. His first impression was a lasting impression—a warm, sincere handshake and an incredible, mesmerizing voice. Even if you didn't agree with something he said, you always liked how he said it. We will miss him.

Our condolences go out to his wife Bernice, his two daughters, his two grandchildren and his home community in Prince George's County Maryland, where he touched the lives of so many. May God bless his family and friends, and may the remarkable Bennie Thayer rest in peace.●

HONORING A COLUMBINE HERO, BOY SCOUT EVAN TODD

• Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to share with my colleagues a pair of statements I recently received from an exceptional young man in Colorado, Mr. Evan Todd of Littleton. Evan was one of the many unfortunate victims of the horrific shooting that took place at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Evan was the first student shot in the library at Columbine High School, and despite his injuries he assisted other students and administered first aid to a seriously wounded peer until emergency services could arrive. Evan, an active Boy Scout, was awarded the prestigious Boy Scouts of America Honor Medal for his inspiring actions. Still a Columbine student, Evan has dedicated a tremendous amount of time to speaking to other students and adults around